CIVIL SOCIETY 2.0 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Civil Society 2.0?
Civil Society 2.0 is an initiative to create a self-sustaining movement to connect social good organizations with technology based tools and volunteers to help raise digital literacy and increase their impact in the 21st century.

What is the background?
Secretary Clinton announced Civil Society 2.0 in Morocco in November of 2009 with a vision to increase capacity for civil society organizations through the use of connection technologies such as mobile, web, and social software.

What need does Civil Society 2.0 address?
Many civil society organizations never hear about the competitions online or the many grants, resources and volunteers available. Getting online and learning how to participate in a crowdfunding competition, learning disaster preparedness, or how to apply for volunteers online are examples of digital resource training.

Who exactly is Civil Society 2.0 helping?
The intent is to help small organizations working for the social benefit such as charities, NGOs, CSOs, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, social movements, business cooperatives, coalitions, and advocacy groups.

Who are we not helping?
The tools and resources developed can also benefit larger organizations and small businesses, but are designed for smaller civil society organizations that are new to connection technologies.

Who can help?
Anyone with a little internet savvy to those with hard core programming skills can provide valuable assistance remotely. If you are reading this you are a potential technology volunteer.

What type of work can be done remotely?
You can help these groups with anything from data entry, research, fact checking, translation, and mapping to learning how to participate in fundraising campaigns by setting up an online social media presence such as a blog or Facebook page. If you're a programmer, you can assist with mobile applications and database design for these organizations for example.

How do you connect with groups not online?
TechCamp will go overseas and address web visibility and connectivity of these groups. It's a forum for hearing needs, identifying problems, offering training and prescribing and building mobile and web based solutions.

Who takes this over?
You do. Any organization or partner or individual can play a role in Civil Society 2.0. This approach belongs to the worldwide general public. It's an open-source model for a new way of international problem solving.

Is there a website or central gathering place?
At the moment we are carrying on the conversation on a LinkedIn Group platform as we work on a larger strategic plan for online partners and an online home.
Please join the group at: http://linkd.in/civilsoc2

Why is this important now?
With each passing year, more and more resources are created online or accessed via mobile technology. These resources only exist to those who know how to use them and how to find them. Joining a network ensures these groups won't be left behind.

What is the underlying philosophy?
People want to help. We have seen a global surge in people volunteering to aid social good efforts. Digital volunteering can't solve all the problems, but capturing the energy of the online community's resources, skills, knowledge and time can have great future effects. This is *Collaborative Development*, and a new way of solving problems through multiple stakeholders on a vast network.

What models does it embrace?
- Open-source software, skills and resource development.
- Harnessing the cognitive surplus of skilled connected individuals everywhere
- Connect the unconnected: year after year, social benefit groups will be left behind from the exploding resources and access only available online to those who know how to use them.
- Tech-powered crisis response models, *even when there is no crisis.*
- Disaster mitigation through building networks and infrastructure in crisis prone areas.

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"The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens." - Alexis de Tocqueville

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Why is the State Department involved?

The State Department has long supported the advancement of civil society. In an increasingly networked world, it is critical that we help civil society groups advance their work in the 21st century. By strengthening this network, we continue and promote the work and mission of civil society that is key to our foundation as a democracy.

The State Department's support stems from the realization that:

- Collaborative technologies are changing the way we work internally and how we interface externally.
- There are groups on the ground promoting democratic development and working effectively towards millennium development goals - and we need to support them and their work.
- Innovation happens everywhere, and technology transfer goes in both directions (undeveloped world to developed world and back).
- Understanding the needs of local CSOs, NGOs and grassroots organizations can better inform market development, needs and innovations.

[1]*Random Hacks of Kindness is group founded by Google, Microsoft, Yahoo and the World Bank – their mission is to bring together programmers and technology volunteers from across the world to assist in social good efforts through participation in "global hackathons".*

Is this a long term initiative or just an event?

The State Department is focused long term on helping to convene and connect civil society with the technology based community. In a three-step pilot, we plan to socialize the idea to tech and international social benefit communities so others may carry it forward. Our aim is for ***TechCamp*** to become a self-organizing, self-replicating event that can be organized by communities all over the world, similar to the *TEDx* franchise.

1. *Tech@State*: Civil Society 2.0
Washington, DC, November 4–5.

Goal: Convene various thought leaders, technologists and civil society organizations to kick start the conversation on Civil Society 2.0.

2. *TechCamp:Santiago*
Santiago, Chile November 20.

Goal*:* Convene a group of civil society organizations from across Latin America to work with both regional and international tech participants. Identify and clearly understand needs of these groups and find solutions, volunteers and resources to address those needs. Test and refine the ***TechCamp*** model for raising digital literacy, building solutions and replicating in other localities.

***3. Random Hacks of Kindness* Online Event, Global, December 4-5**

Goal: Bring the expressed needs from TechCamp: Chile and of NGOs everywhere in an international online problem solving event called ***Random Hacks of Kindness[1].*** Technology volunteers will build solutions to challenges identified in Chile and compiled from other social good organizations. Hackers and techies can swarm together on issues for a weekend of programming, building and coding.

Once these three pilots are complete we will work with the larger technology community and international civil society community to share learning and plan the next steps with careful consideration of organizations' and volunteers' needs. The tool kits will be posted after the event for any and all to use and improve.